

# HOLIDAY PARTIES AND GIFTS

## GIFTS AND INVITATIONS

**Are there limits on holiday gifts Federal employees may accept?**

- Yes; gifts offered during the holiday season are no different than gifts offered at other times. They may not be accepted if given because of the employee's Government position or from someone with interests before the Department, unless an exception applies. Common exceptions are: (1) gifts based on a personal relationship and (2) gifts worth \$20 or less (if less than \$50 in gifts from the same source during the year).

**May Federal employees accept invitations to holiday parties?**

- Yes, but an invitation from anyone with interests before the Department may be accepted only if it is: (1) based on a personal relationship, (2) \$20 or less in value, or (3) to an event attended by a large number and broad range of persons and the employee's supervisor approves attendance as benefitting the agency and as not creating an adverse public reaction. Approval generally is not appropriate for an event that is primarily entertainment, such as a concert or play.

## GIFTS BETWEEN EMPLOYEES

**May employees collect money for an office holiday party?**

- Yes, but participation must be voluntary—no one may be coerced. Those attending may be required to pay a reasonable set amount for the per person costs. Supervisors should not request funds and may not require participation.

**May co-workers exchange gifts?**

- Yes, if all persons are participating voluntarily. Employees may participate in mutual gift exchanges, but the value should be limited to no more than \$10 if subordinates will be exchanging gifts with supervisors. A gift to a supervisor may be no more than \$10. This is true even if employees pool contributions for the gift.

**May contract workers participate in office parties and gift exchanges?**

- Yes. They may not be solicited for a party contribution, but may voluntarily pay for their *per person* costs. Federal employees may give gifts to contract workers, but may only accept gifts totaling of \$20 or less from all contract workers.

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**A WORD ABOUT ETHICS**